

THE MGC REGISTER of NEW ZEALAND

MG Car Club (Auckland Centre) Inc.

Newsletter No. 17, August 2016



.....Susan Heath.....

It is with great sadness that we must inform you of the passing of Susan Heath. Our thoughts and wishes are with Harvey and the family at this time and we know that you would wish to join us in sending Harvey our condolences and heart-felt wishes.



Harvey and Susan's love affair with their MGC GT started in the UK during their big OE in the late 1960s. They took up residence in the lovely riverside town of Kingston-upon-Thames where Harvey worked at University Motors. Susan also worked close by at a bank in Surbiton. The "C" was purchased 1969 being one of the final 141 cars built at Abingdon and purchased by UM. On their return to NZ in 1972 the car was shipped out to Auckland and, although sold when the children arrived, was bought back in 2006.

Voyage of Discovery Continued.....Ian Grant

Late last year, at the annual book fair here in Matamata, one of the residents decided to part with his ten-year collection of NZ Classic Car magazines. After helping to set up the venue for the event, I had some time to scan the Cars for Sale section of the magazines to perhaps uncover some MGCs. I found three, a white roadster from 2002, a green GT from 2004 and a red roadster from 2005. The photograph in the advertisement for the red roadster showed



the car side-on, so the registration plate was not visible. It was in the Hawkes Bay area and it wasn't too hard to work out from our register records that this was the ex-USA car that was bought from that advert by **Chris Hart**, who has since sold it to **Willie Stewart**. The contact details for the green GT had the car located in Queenstown. I didn't know of any MGCs there, so which car was it? The registration number in the photograph showed a



1969 MGC Roadster.

Superb example of classic MG; complete professional engine and bodywork restoration (all paperwork available); must be seen and driven! \$25,000

Triumph
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personalised plate MG3000, which is not to be confused with the black and silver plate MG3000 which is on another CGT. I purchased the full report from CarJam and just one owner is listed since 1998, which tells me the car did not sell. The advert stated the car had been in the owner's hands for the last 23 years, so he bought it in 1981. No previous ownership history is recorded, and as the car has a New Zealand VIN, it must have been off the road for a while before going through compliance at that time. Both the engine number and the chassis number match with the factory records and this GT, originally Primrose Yellow, is the earliest chassis number of the 31 cars that were exported new from Abingdon. I called the number on the advert but the lady I spoke to was not the owner of the car, so it is still to be located. If any of our South Island owners know of this GT, I would really appreciate some information as I would like to contact the owner especially with MGC50 coming up. It was a Wellington telephone number in the

advertisement for the white roadster in 2002 and I discovered it was brought to New Zealand from the UK in 1997. It was sold from the advertisement, shipped to Melbourne and on to its new owner in South Australia where it has changed hands once more. Through our South Australian contact **Ian Hobbs**, I have corresponded with both of its Australian owners and now have copies of the NZ compliance paperwork and the English Heritage certificate. There is still a white 1968 roadster in the Wellington area that is now back on the road with the registration number MG1968. Any leads to the whereabouts of this one would be very much appreciated.

Fitting the Cylinder Head Gasket.....Bruce Ibbotson

Bruce is the well-known MGC aficionado from Queensland and the proud owner of a 1968 MGC GT affectionately referred to as the PFT (Pretty Fast Truck) We have featured various articles from **Bruce** and thank him for sharing his own procedure for fitting factory (BMC) head gaskets.

"I bought my car direct from the factory and ordered several BMC spare gasket sets and parts as it was the only new one to come to Australia. I also ordered a crate of parts from Downton Engineering [they were a BMC agent] in 1975 as getting parts here in Australia, at that time, was almost impossible. The "De-carbonising Gasket Set" (Part No. 8G2537) contained grey plastic head gaskets as did the six head gaskets ordered from Downton. The only instruction on the leaflet sent with these gaskets was "Fit the gasket dry to oil free block and head faces" and the BMC Workshop Manual gave the sequence for head tightening and torque figure but that was all.

I have always had water loss at maximum power from the manifold side of the GGL (Great Green Lump) and when the cylinder head was converted for unleaded fuel the engineer advised me that the gasket was about to blow between cylinders 4 & 5. His recommended procedure for fitting the head gasket was as follows:

- *Spray the gasket with 2 or 3 light coats of High Temperature Copper spray (see note below) to totally clean and dry the block and head faces.*
- *Torque the head bolts down to 75 lbs/ft.*
- *Run the engine up to operating temperature and then shut down.*
- *When cold re-torque to 75 lbs/ft.*
- *Drive the car for 500 miles and re-torque the head again.*

I followed this procedure and 35,000 miles later had no coolant loss at all. I also change the coolant at three yearly intervals. This same procedure was used recently when I rebuilt the engine and I was surprised at how much the head pulled down after the first 500 "running-in" miles. As a general note, always back off the head nuts a little before re-torquing to 75 lbs/ft and reset the tappets each time".

Note: VHTSP21A Copper Gasket Cement. Cleveland, Ohio, USA Bar Code 10155 04456.

It's a Small World.....Ian Grant

A couple of months ago there was a set of 15" painted wire wheels for sale on TradeMe in Auckland. As I don't like to let an opportunity go by, I asked a question of the seller about the car they came off. He responded with a telephone number, so I gave him a call. I introduced myself and during the conversation there was a slight pause and I was asked, "Is that Ian Grant who used to work at Coutts?" Turns out I was talking to an old work colleague from when I was parts manager at Coutts & Co back in the early- to mid-1980s.

Richard Lawrence had owned an MGC roadster during the latter part of the '80s and had fitted chrome wires to the car after he had given it a major makeover. I



I was, of course, very interested to know which roadster it was. He mentioned he bought it from the late **Angela d'Audney** of television fame, a lady who loved her cars and who I had seen on a few occasions in the C at club events during the late '70s. A couple of days later

an e-mail arrived from Richard with some of photographs which were taken during the makeover and another on completion. This roadster has been owned for some time by **Shaun Leahy** and I sent him the photographs Richard had passed on to me for his reference and in turn Shaun has e-mailed me a copy of the original ownership papers and the Heritage Certificate for our register records.

2017 Calendar.....Ian Grant

Those of you who supported the UK Register's 2016 calendar project will be working your way through the year with the factory GTS, ROMEO, as the MGC on show for this month. This calendar was a trial for the production of the 50th anniversary calendar for 2017. Looks like things have changed a bit recently. While mowing my lawns and therefore having some time to do some deep thinking, I thought about a calendar from October 2017 to September 2019, this two-year period covering the production run of the MGC 50 years earlier. The theme for each month could be "50 years ago this month....." with each month featuring something that occurred during that month 50 years ago. I ran this past Ginny Cartmell and she has discussed it with her committee and they have decided to run with my idea and produce a two-year calendar. No doubt it will be a topic of conversation at the 50th Anniversary in England next year and you will certainly be kept up-to-date as more information comes to hand.



Will this be a calendar photo? Earls Court Motor Show, London, 18th October. 1967

MGC50 Celebration..... in New Zealand

We are pleased to update you on our progress with the MGC50 event and can confirm that the main **North Island** gathering will be held at **REX BENNS MUSEUM** in Drury on **Saturday 21st & Sunday 22rd October 2017**.



The North & South Island tours remain unchanged at the present time and are as follows:

North Island Tour - Spring 2017 (October / Labour Weekend and the following week).

The main North Island meeting is at BENNS MUSEUM in Drury, Auckland with a tour south via the **Bay of Plenty, Taupo, Hawkes Bay** and **Wairarapa** to **Wellington**.

South Island Tour - Autumn 2018 (March / April)

The main South Island meeting will be in the **Christchurch** area with a drive from **Picton** to **Christchurch** via **Nelson** and one of the alpine passes. Then we go on south to **Dunedin** and on to **Wanaka** for the Easter weekend 30th and 31st March and 1st and 2nd April 2018.

The 50th Anniversary of the MGC in the UK "More Than Meets the Eye"

Wed. 7th June to Monday 12th June 2017



Entries for the big celebration opened on 1st July and the total attending will be very close to 100 by the time you read this and the event programme is on our web page. It will definitely have an international flavour with Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States being represented so far. Ian and Joanna Grant, Peter and Raewyn Dunlop and Harvey Heath have registered with Harvey shipping his Mineral Blue GT over to the UK for the event. The activities will take

in the counties of Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. **Ginny Cartmell**, the UK Register's secretary, has asked us to pass this information on and wants you all to know you are very welcome to attend.

Check out the details on the UK MG Car Club website www.mgcc.co.uk or email Ginny on ginnycartmell@btinternet.com. **MG Live at Silverstone** will also be held in June so this will give overseas visitors the opportunity to attend both events. We will keep you up-to-date as we get closer to this event.

50th Anniversary Regalia

We are planning to bring in the new UK produced **50th Anniversary** polo shirts and regalia for our own MGC50 celebrations in 2017-2018. These will be to order only so if you are interested in owning some of this collectable fashion wear, keys rings or grille and pin badges, please let us know and we will e-mail you full details including sizes and price.

Polo Shirts, GT & roadster, long & short sleeve, men & ladies (blue only);

Caps, GT and roadster (blue only); **Badges**, GT, GTS and roadster (in six colours).



MGC GTS Replica For Sale in USA.....Ian Grant

We recently received the following from **Chip Pedersen** in California –

*I received a copy of your newsletter from **Henry Camisasca** (MBL546E). I've known Henry for many years and am indebted to him for allowing me detailed access to Mabel as reference for my GTS Tribute Replica that I have built over the course of ten years. Fibreglass GTS replicas are available from Doug Smith in the UK but I wanted to go a step further and had the body made of 100% steel, hand-rolled on an English wheel. Ironically, the panel beater I found was from New Zealand and he did an amazing job. I didn't know Henry at the time so I had only old black and white race photographs as reference. The skill of the body man can clearly be seen in side-by-side photographs of my car and Mabel on my website. I'm looking for a new owner for my car, which has just 4,000 miles on the odo and was wondering if mention of it in your newsletter would be an option assuming you believe a left-hand drive car would be of interest in your part of the world. Many thanks, **Chip Pedersen** (Southern California).*

Henry Camisasca owns MBL546E (MaBeL) which, along with RMO699F (RoMeO), were the two factory GTS race cars. For those of you who bought the register calendar, Romeo is the feature car this month. Mabel is shown in the factory advertisement that was the final page of our last newsletter. If you would like to have a look at pictures and a video of Chip's GTS, go to www.MGC-GTS.com.



Check Those Tyre Manufacture Dates

Glen Stenhouse of Christchurch, the new owner of **FKR853, Primrose Yellow, MGC GT** which was imported in 2005 from a museum in **Las Vegas**, has sent us this photo of a tyre from his car. Glen believes the tyres were probably from the '80s. The car was extremely low mileage, 25,000 miles, and they looked good on the surface with great tread and no sign of perishing. It let go on a 100kph left-hand bend when it was the loaded wheel. Interestingly the car had passed a WOF about 9 days earlier. This story is a good reminder to check the manufacturing dates on our own tyres. Surprisingly car tyres only have a four year validity so these tyres, at over thirty years old, were well outside their "sell by" date! It is rumoured that Glen is rebuilding the car as a GTS replica. We wish him all the best with the project and look forward to receiving more details when available.



Ross Osborne's MGC GT Update

The well-known motoring enthusiast **Ross Osborne** of Dunedin, who bought **Jill Porter's** GT, has already started stripping the car ready for rebuilding. Ross, who is the area Executive and Membership Registrar for the **Austin Healey Car Club**, has high hopes for his new project and was pleased to find little or no serious corrosion to the main structure or panels. This car is destined to be a real stunner if Ross's Austin Healey 100/6 Mille Miglia is anything to go by.

Ian Grant also received this progress

report. The car is one of the group that was shipped new to New Zealand on the Auckland Star and after getting the car home, courtesy of **Inky Tulloch's** car transporter, the work has commenced. Ross has been very pleasantly surprised by the overall condition of this GT, considering how it looked as Jill's garage was not the driest environment during the winter months. Everything underneath is in remarkably good shape with just a little rust found in one of the sills and not one bolt has refused to come out. The engine started and ran well and this has now been removed for the engine bay and the boot area to be media blasted and then it will be ready to go for the bodywork to be addressed and to tidy up a couple of earlier repairs. We are looking forward to seeing this GT back on the road and participating in our MGC50 celebrations.



Photos: MGC in the early stages of dismantling and the AH 100/6.

Mighty MGs Run, Sunday 6th NovemberIan Grant



Following on from last year's successful run the 2016 event will take place on Sunday 6th November. Our meeting point will be at **Tatuanui** on **State Highway 27**, 8kms / 5mls north-east of **Morrinsville**. Assembly time will be 10:00am for a 10:15am departure. From there it will be a short drive into **Morrinsville** for a fun event, details of which will be revealed at our assembly point. More information regarding the rest of the day's activities will be made available closer to the date. Please book this date in your diaries now.

Photo from the 2015 event.

New Kiwi MGC Register Logo

The more observant of you folk will have noticed the new "Kiwi" inspired register logo on the front of this newsletter. We like it but were wondering if you agree? Please let us know.



Ex-John Chatham GTS Goes Under the Hammer

The following announcement was found on the internet by **Ian Christie**, an MGCC Classic Trial competitor, and forwarded to us for comment. Those of you with deep pockets may have liked a punt for this piece of MGC history. Not a works car but very close. They were expecting between Euro 150K to Euro 250K. It actually sold on **Peter Dunlop's** birthday for **Euro 140,000**, well below the expected figure. He is still wondering where his wife has hidden it!

1969 MG MGC GTS Sebring

Chassis: MGC 500757 Engine: AXSP JC 101 Body: GCD1 03307
Auction at Le Sporting Monte-Carlo, Monaco, Saturday 14th May 2016



History & Specification

Estimated power 220 bhp, 2912 cc OHV inline six-cylinder engine with triple Weber carburettors, four-speed manual transmission with overdrive, independent front suspension, live rear axle with semi-elliptical leaf springs, and four-wheel hydraulic disc brakes. Wheelbase: 2,311 mm

- One of six genuine GTS Sebrings
- The only example built to "super lightweight specification"
- Driven by racing legend John Chatham
- Eligible for a variety of classic endurance and sports prototype events
- Complete with FIA paperwork

The MGC GTS Sebring is one of the most iconic creations to come out of the BMC Competitions Department in the 1960s. Work on designing the lightweight Cs began in 1966, to compete in the prototype sports car categories. **Six body shells** were built, with the centre structure built from steel similar to the road-going version, while the exterior panels, such as the roof panel, doors, and the instantly recognisable bubble-arched wings, were formed in aluminium. Ultimately, only two lightweight versions of the MGC GT were assembled by BMC at Abingdon. These Works cars ran in the 1967 **Targa Florio** and in 1968, the MGC GTS, as it was now known, raced at Sebring and the 84-hour-long



Marathon de la Route at the **Nürburgring**. Their final works-supported outings were at Sebring in 1969, when the MGC competition project was cancelled. However, four lightweight shells originally constructed at the Competitions Department remained. Legendary Austin-Healey man **John Chatham** was due to drive the GTS Sebring on the Targa Florio in 1970, but with the cancellation of the programme he was offered the opportunity to purchase the remaining chassis and components in order to complete the final four cars. When **John Chatham** prepared this particular GTS for competition use, he used the very latest BMC components from the race programme, including an aluminium engine block, which this car retains, and which was mounted further back in the engine bay. Magnesium alloy wheels were also fitted, effectively creating a "super-lightweight". It is believed that this is the only surviving original aluminium block. Thanks to its lightweight aluminium construction, the car has a dry weight of only around 900 kilograms. Recalling his ownership of the car, John Chatham notes that the car was highly competitive as he raced the MGC at the United Kingdom's most famous race circuits, including **Silverstone and Castle Combe**. Chatham also raced the car in club and mod-sport events throughout the early 1970s. He was evidently fond of the car, as it remained in his ownership until 2004 before passing it to the current owner.



Photos: Car as sold plus **John & Vicki Chatham** lunching at Monaco (*looks very liquid*), John Chatham photo courtesy of **Mark Donaldson, AH Car Club President**. Above auction notice courtesy of RM Auctions & Sotheby's.

Washer Bottle Strap.....Ian Grant

Late last month I received the MG Experience newsletter, as usual, by e-mail. This is from the United States and there are some very interesting discussions in the various forums. There was nothing relating to the MGC in the latest list of topics but I decided to have a look at the MGC forum just in case there was anything of interest. One particular heading caught my attention – MGC Washer Bottle Strap. When I bought my roadster back in 2011, the original Tudor washer bottle, oblong in shape, was sitting on the right-hand chassis rail with nothing but washer fluid, the hose and gravity holding it in place. Research of my parts catalogue showed a strap with hooks at either



end, part # AHC364, was required to secure it properly. The MG Owners' Club parts list showed the MGC strap as NLA (no longer available) superseding to the MG Midget strap, CHA458. As this strap is fitted over the top of the Midget bottle it is somewhat longer so needs to be shortened to fit the MGC. I ordered one and it duly arrived. At this time the C was still in the process of being prepared for compliance and a return to the road, so it was at **Terry Kelk's** premises in Henderson. I took the strap to Terry and he said he would alter it to fit. Not long afterwards Terry moved premises and during this time the strap was misplaced, never to be found. My long-suffering,



creative better half came up with an idea that looked like it might work. A wire used for hanging curtains that has the plastic coating, with a hook screwed into the wire at each end and cut to the right length was made. The bottle was now secure but it would lose points in a concours. The forum post explained that **John Benton** in England had manufactured the correct length straps with the original style hook at each end using Pirelli seat webbing, which is cotton-reinforced and very strong. It is slightly wider at 2cms than the original with the end bars stitched into place using an industrial machine, rather than being riveted. The overall look replicates the factory part. I contacted John by e-mail, paid using PayPal and it arrived in the mail just a week after finalising the order. **Total cost was \$NZ25.25 including postage.** If you require one for your project or yours looks like it needs replacing, just let me know and I will pass on John's contact details.

And Finally

One day a man said to his wife, "*I don't know how you can be so stupid and so beautiful all at the same time*". The wife responded, "*Allow me to explain, God made me beautiful so you would be attracted to me, God made me stupid so I would be attracted to you*"

Drive safely, enjoy your MGC and remember C-ing is believing.....

Ian Grant



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NB: No calls after 9pm please

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the MGCC, the MGC Register or its Editor. Readers should exercise their own judgement when considering technical or other matters, information or advice.

Cars for Sale

1968 Tartan Red MGC GT

New Zealand new, painted wire wheels, non-overdrive, owned by the same family since 1986, rebuilt during the late 1980s. General condition is exceptional, engine bay photo taken in 2013. Car can be inspected in Auckland.

Please contact **Alistair Dunlop** on **ADunlop@alphaflight.com.au** for price and more details.



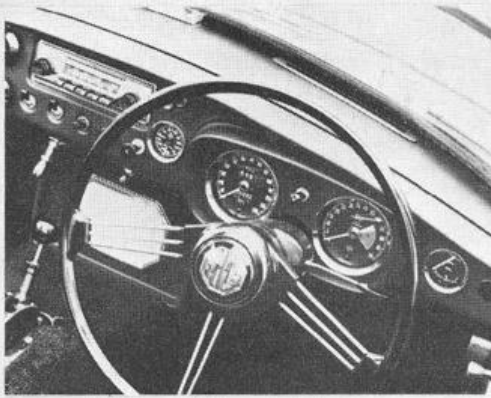
1968 Snowberry White MGC GT

New Zealand new, overdrive, cruise control and knock-on minilites, current owner since 2001. General condition very good. Car can be inspected in Cambridge.

Please contact **Mike Laimbeer** on **07 8494625** or email wannab@xtra.co.nz for price and more details.




Worth looking at



The MGC is a completely new six-cylinder sports car—available in open two-seater or GT form. The new six-cylinder, 3-litre engine is coupled to a four-speed all-synchromesh gearbox. Automatic transmission is available as an optional extra for the first time on an MG sports car.

Smiths instruments keep well abreast of all the developments on this exciting new model. Smiths heating and ventilating equipment ensure a high degree of comfort. And BMC exclusively recommend Radiomobile car radio for this, as for all their production models.

SMITHS instruments · Car heaters · Thermostats
Batteries · Petroflex tubing · Bluecol · Spark plugs
Radiomobile car radio

 **SMITHS INDUSTRIES LIMITED**
MOTOR ACCESSORY DIVISION



Important Notice:

A recent study has found women who carry a little extra weight live longer than men who mention it.